

New bills tougher to counterfeit

By Roger Boye

New U.S. paper money to be circulated next year looks "virtually indistinguishable at first glance" from Federal Reserve notes now in use, according to a respected hobbyist who has seen some specimens.

For example, microprinting around the center portrait on a new \$20 bill looks like a thin, oval-shaped line, according to Burnett Anderson, Washington correspondent for the hobby newspaper Numismatic News. He added that when he examined the line under magnification, he saw that it actually was a series of letters .007 of an inch high reading "United States of America," repeated many times.

Microprinting will appear on bills of all denominations as a counterfeiting deterrent. In addition, Treasury officials will print new bills on paper containing a thin, clear polyester strip that will run vertically through each bill.

Anderson said the strip appears as a "slight irregularity" in the surface of the paper. An inscription on the strip [such as "USA ONE" repeated several times on \$1 notes] becomes visible when the bill is held up to a light, he added.

Presumably, the two design additions will be virtually impossible to duplicate on even the most sophisticated color copying machines. Anderson—one of the few persons outside of government to have seen samples of the new currency—reported on his observations in the Oct. 7 Numismatic News.

● Canada has released a new \$2 banknote, the second denomination with sweeping changes intended to stop would-be counterfeiters using improved photocopying machines.

The new notes depict an enlarged portrait of Queen Elizabeth II on the front side and two robins on the back. Security elements include microprinting, multidirectional fine-line patterns and a range of pastel colors across the note.

The Bank of Canada released a revamped \$5 note earlier this year; additional denominations are expected during 1987.